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292 This dress was in regular use in every village in Metabhum until a year or two ago. At my last visit in March 1934, I was 535 amazed to find that, almost as in obedience to some decree that had 178 gone forth, the youth of the hills had abandoned the rib-dress, the shield and the gaily-coloured head-dress and skirt, sometimes wearing in lieu cheap bazaar singlets and a *dhoti*, retaining, however, the buttock-bells, the songs and the dance-steps. The older men all said that it was a spontaneous decision of the younger generation, decided upon because of the cost of buying the expensive yards of cloth needed for the dress; but this would not account for the abandonment of the shield, which they make themselves, and for which peacock tails are better than cloth streamers. Many have actually thrown away their cloth and shields. But some still think it necessary to hang them up round fresh graves, and I found that all the youths still know how to make them, and were willing to make them in camp. In 1932 a rumour went through all the tribes 203 of Jeypore and spread thence into Bastar that a god had descended ●784 on one of the mountains of the Eastern Ghats and commanded all men to give up keeping black poultry and goats, wearing clothes or 178 using umbrellas or blankets with any black in them, and using beads or articles made of aluminium alloy. The message was rapidly bruited abroad, and everywhere villages had '*bohorani*' ceremonies for purifying themselves from disease, and cast out black goats, cocks, hens, umbrellas, blankets, 'waskats', beads, aluminium ornaments and domestic utensils on the village boundary. Mohammedans began to make a good thing out of slaughtering the goats or exporting them. Strenuous propaganda by the State soon stopped this impoverishing rumour, and some of the villagers in the end recovered much of their property from the police, who had been ordered to take charge of it. At the time, the Bison-horn Marias seemed to have been only a little affected and the Hill Marias not at all; possibly this sudden abandonment of the most picturesque features of their dancing costume may be a late repercussion. Such sudden moves amongst Indian primitive tribes are not uncommon; the Gonds of Nagpur and adjacent districts a few years ago suddenly decided to give up keeping poultry and pigs as a measure of social uplift.

292 The *taghali* or bark cloak used by the Hill Maria for warmth or, primarily, protection against heavy dew and rain, has already been mentioned as deputizing occasionally for the sleeping-mat. Hutton speaks of the Angami Nagas making 'a large hat of leaves and basket work . . . as well as a rain-coat of plaited grass, the ends of which hang out loose, to-

Rain-clothes

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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But in many villages instead of a communal *padawo'gha'i* there is a separate hut at the back of each long-house for the use of the residents of each house contained in the long-house, called by the same name; or else in each house there is a *padawo'gha'i* room known generally as *hala*,[1] with a door opening at the back of the house, separated from the rest of the house by a *binda* or low mud threshold about three feet from the back door. It is absolutely *polo* or taboo for any male to set foot in the menstruation hut or room; I once saw a son who wanted to enter the house by the back door take a flying leap from outside so as to land beyond the *binda*. In every *hala* room there is a complete set of cooking vessels and utensils for the woman to use while she is in her courses, when it is *polo* for her to touch any of the regular household articles. The menstruation hut or room is also the scene of all child-births.

There is in some big villages a resting hut for travellers or State officials, known as the *paik-gotul* or *Kos-gotul*; *paik* is the word used for a member of the old militia, and *Kos* is the general word used by all Gonds for Hindus. This may also have a stable attached.

The sketch-plan on page 105 illustrates a fairly typical Hill Maria village, crowning a mountain spur; it represents the site occupied in 1930 by the Kutru Mar village of Karangal. The long-houses here had nearly all of them bamboo fences between them and the street, running along their front about three or four feet from their front wall. The doors have been shown only in the houses in long-house no. 6. The fences only give a little privacy, and spaces useful for storing fuel; they are not garden (*bari*) enclosures. Bamboo is very plentiful around Karangal; where it is less common, these fences are absent. The stockades of thick poles at the eastern side of this village were made to afford protection from the fierce and cold wind blowing off the hills from the north-east. The Village Mother's shrine was a cylindrical basket of stones resting on five boulders in the open space between the dormitory and the *kasyeq-gaita's* house, near the latter's *udam-garia* seat of honour. This seat was a flat slab of stone resting on five thin slabs stuck vertically in the ground. The *pen-rawar* shrine of the clan-god Koruk Pen was a round hut surrounded with a bamboo fence to the east of the village by the side of the path leading to the *penda* fields; there is another shrine of this god at Nugur, a Parllo clan village a few miles away in the Indrawati valley. In Karangal the only non-Maria was a Maria-speaking Rawat herdsman, who was allowed a house site at some distance from the main street;

[1] Or *ala*; the aspirate is often dropped by Hill Marias.

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166 361 787 791 778 When shifting is to begin, all the parish lands being lands of the clan, the *wadda'i* or priest of the clan-god is usually consulted; he is generally himself the *leski* or medium whom the god possesses, and if the god through him directs that the village should be shifted, he leads the villagers to the new site; sometimes the *wadda'i* himself is not a medium, but keeps a *leski* as an assistant. At the new site the *kasyeq-gaita* clears a small patch of ground in honour of the Village Mother, and on this offers an egg, some grain and flowers in her name, over which he places stones in a basketry cylinder or as a cairn. This will remain as her shrine in the new village, sometimes, as we have seen, inside the dormitory fencing, sometimes outside it but in the main village street, or sometimes right outside the village in a grove, a shed being erected over it. The removal of the cairn would be an omen of disaster, only to be avoided by shifting the village. The Orcha villagers had only a small table-stone at the foot of a *saja* tree in a grove to mark their Village Mother. Handawada, besides a cairn, had a forked stick of *saja* wood oiled and polished, and whipped round the fork with *kosa* silk whipping, with a leaning thatched roof to protect her from the elements. Whatever form her shrine or representation may take, it is left behind when the village is deserted, and not shifted to the new village; for it is regarded as valuable evidence of the clan or parish property in the land. The only things removed are the pots in which grain, etc., is cooked at the Mother's feasts, the cooking utensils and the knives, which the *kasyeq-gaita* or religious headman must himself carry under his arm, *not* on his head, which is taboo, to the shed erected to house them near the Mother's shrine in the new village.

[184]

361 166 In the villages which I have seen being shifted, the earliest buildings to be erected have been the village dormitory, the houses of the 'advance guard', the religious and the secular headmen, and the menstruation hut. Villagers often put up their pig-sties before their own houses. A temporary dormitory is often put up to house the bachelors, and replaced after the houses have been built by a more permanent and elaborate structure.

The villagers remove all their utensils and household goods from their old to their new houses when the village is shifted. But they move no building materials; they leave the deserted houses to the mercy of the elements, which means that they are soon choked in the mass of high grass and scrub jungle that immediately springs up on the deserted site, and probably burnt down when the forest undergrowth is fired in the following spring.

[text continues on p. 112]

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342 Rough ground-plans of three typical Hill Maria houses are given in the illustration on page 111. The Nugur house was the end house of a long-house, and faced south on to the main village street. It differs from the other two in having no partition wall between the veranda (*algi*) and the *angadi*, or women's kitchen and sleeping room; the *angadi* in this case is in fact almost a continuation of the veranda round the eastern side of the *lonu*. The husband actually slept in the veranda and his wife in the *angadi* in warm weather, but in the *lonu* in winter and rains. This house had no *hala* or menstruation room, because the village had a communal menstruation hut; so also the house had no back door.

Houses

The Kurmer house faced north on to the main street, and was the central house of a long-house of three houses; its western and eastern walls were thus only partitions separating it from the other two houses. It was itself almost two houses, as the widowed mother [592] of Dedha Keye, the occupant, had the eastern *algi*, *angadi* and *lonu* for her exclusive use; but there was no door between her portion of the *algi* and Keye's portion, only a partial continuation across the veranda of the partition wall between her and Keye's rooms. The widow was too old to need a *hala*, and so there was only one for Keye's wife in his part of the house, and this had a back door. Like the Nugur house, this house had no *agha* room.

The Handawada secular headman's (*peda's*) house was at the north end of a long-house containing three houses and facing west on to the village street; the other two houses had their verandas (*algi*) and entrances on the street side, facing west. His *algi* was therefore very small, and only nominally walled off from the open [351] ground to the north of the house by a bamboo wicker-work fence about 3½ feet high, being thus useless for keeping property. Where, as in the other houses illustrated, the veranda is in front of the house and parallel to the roof-tree, it is easy to construct a front wall as high as the roof, which is there barely 3½ feet above the ground.

342 513 784 The *agha* is the husband's living and sleeping room, and it is taboo (*polo*) for his wife, a mature daughter or any woman to sleep in it; but boys too small to sleep in the bachelors' dormitory and immature daughters may sleep there. In hot weather the males of the family often sleep under the granary, which is built on piles, and when houses have no *agha* this is the usual sleeping place at all times for the men of the family, and for male guests except when the latter can be accommodated in the village dormitory 342 (*gotal-lon*). It is strictly taboo for any female to enter a granary, 513 or to sleep under one. Every *agha* has a large *alpanji* or sleeping

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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platform raised above the ground on wooden legs about 3 feet high, and consisting of a rectangular wooden frame from 5 to 7 feet long by from 5 to 3 feet broad; no attempt has been made to draw to scale those shown in the three house plans. On this frame is a framework of criss-cross strips of bamboo bark or *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper cords. In dry weather the father and children sleep on the floor, with possibly a reed sleeping-mat (*masni*) or a bark-cloak (*taghali*) beneath them, and a fire near by; in the rainy season they sleep on the *alpanji* platform, with a fire underneath them. At other times of year it is a convenient shelf for storing baskets and basketry materials, winnows, tools, cords, etc. Where, as in the Kurmer house illustrated, there is no *agha*, the husband may sleep on the floor of the veranda in dry weather, and in wet weather on a sleeping-mat in the *angadi*, while the wife sleeps on the floor of the *lonu*.

The *angadi* is primarily the kitchen and secondarily the sleeping room of the wife and any mature daughter. Besides one or more hearths (*o'idal*) of baked mud, roughly horseshoe shaped, or consisting of three stones, there are one or more mortar holes (*ahki*) sunk in the floor and carefully plastered with mud in which grain is pounded with the club-shaped pestle (*uspal*), and numerous pots or gourd bottles of water, supplies of leaves for leaf-plates, bamboo splinters for stitching them together and baskets of all shapes and sizes. It is taboo for mature women to sleep anywhere except on the floor, and so no *alpanji* is provided in *angadi* or *hala* room. Actually the original custom, still followed in some remote villages, seems to have been for all men to sleep in the village dormitory, or at least under their granaries, and not in the house, save in the season when they slept in the fields; for this reason the Kurmer house without any *agha* probably is an older type than the Handawada. At present, except during the season when all males are sleeping in the field houses, married men as well as bachelors sleep in the village dormitory whenever sexual continence has to be observed, e.g. from the night before the sowing of the *penda* fields till the first blades sprout, and before certain ceremonies.[a] The Hill Marias are still doubtful about the propriety of men sleeping in the house and regard the jungle or some place overshadowed by the thick leaves of the *siari* (*Bauhinia vahlii*) creeper as the right place for intercourse between man and wife; but the old prejudice is fast dying out.[1]

[1] Russell and Hiralal (article, 'Gond', III, 131-2) write:—'In one part of Bastar they have a curious rule that all males, even the married, must sleep in the common house for the eight months of the open season, while their wives sleep in their own houses. A Maria Gond thinks it impious to have sexual intercourse with his wife in his house, as it would be an insult to the

[a] [see cat. 116) p. 420. – Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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The essential features of the *kala* or menstruation room have already been described.

Although also used for storing provisions and goods, the *lonu* room is essentially the room devoted to the Departed (*Hanal*), and is, indeed, often referred to as the *Hanal Kholi*, or Room of the Departed. Here in a corner rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of the Departed, which it is taboo for the husband to touch, and in which the housewife deposits a little meal for the departed ancestors whenever she grinds; and here is the *Hanal O'idal*, or the Hearth of the Departed, on which she cooks the first new grain at each of the new grain eating festivals; the ashes of this are never swept away. There is never a back door to the *lonu*. As no space should be wasted, there is always an *alpanji* platform in the *lonu* for storing provisions, especially jungle produce; but it is never slept on, as women only may sleep in the *lonu*, and it is taboo for them to sleep anywhere except on the floor.

The walls of houses are generally made of vertical pole stockading. The side walls are of poles of a uniform height of from 3 to 3½ feet, while the end walls start from this height at the sides and rise to 6 or 7 feet at the centre; the latter at intervals have forked tops to support the horizontal beams parallel to the sides on which the thatched roof rests. There are generally three of these on either side of the central and highest beam, which is the roof-tree. The roof-tree is supported at intervals along its length by other fork-topped poles resting in the ground, generally built into the partitions between the rooms, or serving as posts for the inside doors, and varying accordingly in number. They are shown on the three ground-plans on page 111 in small circles along the dotted line representing the line of the roof-tree; that dotted line in the Kurmer and Handawada plans should correspond with the partitions shown closely parallel to them. The inner partitions, including those dividing one house in a long-house from another,

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goddess of wealth who lives in the house, and the effect would be to drive her away. Their solicitude for this goddess is the more noticeable, as the Maria Gond's house and furniture probably constitute one of the least valuable human habitations on the face of the globe.'

Whoever gave the authors this information must have been drawing on his imagination. There is no 'goddess of wealth' among the Marias. The modern Maria becomes hilarious over the idea that it is in any way wrong to have intercourse with his wife in the house; if any consideration deterred the older generation, it was the close proximity of the *hanal kunda* (Pot of the Departed) in the *lonu* room of the house, so associated with the cult of the *hanal* or Departed.

Dr. Hutton has referred me to the account of the Kadar tribe of Cochin (*Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. III, p. 214). The Kadar also regard (or used to regard) it as taboo to have sexual intercourse in the house, but husband and wife meet by day at a trysting place in the forest.

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(December-January) or in Mah (January-February); if the clan celebrates the festival later (the Jate clan of Mohnar in Mangnar *pargana*, for example, with its brother clans the Tokalor and the Hukur of Erpanar, celebrates it on the full moon day of Chait (March-April)), the men return to their houses and are free to resume marital relations as soon as the last grain has been winnowed, when the *pen-wadda'i* or clan-priest of the village where the clan-god is kept offers an egg before him, and in the subordinate villages of the clan which have no separate clan-god of their own the *kasyeq-gaita* offers an egg before the Village Mother. In some tracts where the New Urad-Koqsar festival is late there is a separate New Kosra festival in Pusi (December-January), and this appears there to be the signal for the ending of this taboo (*polo*). For it is not only sexual relations and sleeping in the village that are taboo in this period; but also such activities as the cutting of bamboos and grass, which obviously cannot be postponed so late as Phagur and Chait.

While the taboo lasts, and the men live in the fields, the women sleep in the village, and arrive in the fields at sunrise, bringing the day's food already cooked. The men, before starting their day's work, have a substantial meal of *gato* (Hindi, *bhat*) or thick porridge of mixed hill grains, spiced with the various pulses, roselle and other forest fruits and vegetables, salted, and improved by flesh, if available, of field mice, hares or birds. At about 10 a.m. and again at 2 p.m. they expect to have *jawa* (Hindi, *pej*) or thin gruel consisting of the water in which their *gato* has been boiled. They have a final meal of *gato* at sunset, which the women cook in the fields and give their men to eat there, taking back their own share to eat in the village. Cooking pots are kept generally in the *ketul*. At harvest, to save time and enable the women to get to work earlier, the morning meals also are cooked in the fields. On the last day before a woman is due for the seclusion of the menstruation room or hut, she brings food sufficient to last her menfolk that day and the next five.

Harvest

No ceremony precedes reaping. Men, women and children reap, using small iron sickles of the type common throughout the Central Provinces. I have not seen the reaping of the early grains. The *penda* fields in early December are an untidy sight; the various grains and pulses are sown higgledy-piggledy all over the area, and no attempt is made to keep different crops separate. Reaping is therefore an eclectic and slow performance, especially of such grains as *kang* and *bajra*, little of which are sown, and which have, therefore, to be searched for in the welter of other crops. *Sem* and other pulses riot over the poles planted in

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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the midst of the grain crops to support them. The cut crops which are to be threshed are stacked on the wooden platforms prepared before sowing, in beehive shaped stacks, called *paki* by the Hill Marias and *kupa* in Halbi.

The women prepare the threshing-floor (*karanu* in the hill dialect), clearing a piece of ground near the stacks of grain, and plastering it with mud. In the centre of this the men erect a thick bamboo railing on posts. It is *polo* for women to take part in the actual threshing. Oxen are never used. For each cultivator in turn, beginning with the *kasyaq-gaita*, all the men and boys in the village combine to thresh (*wisna*). They range themselves in two rows facing each other, with the bamboo railing between them.[1] Holding this with both their hands and supporting themselves by it, they dance up and down, rubbing the ears of corn between their feet. They thresh in this way only *kodon*, *kutki*, rice, *ghatka*, *chikma* and *hikka*; the women pick the ears of grains like *kang* and *bajra* in baskets, and rub them in their hands to extract the grain. The cultivator whose grain is being threshed is expected to feed all the villagers helping him for that day, and if possible to give them a good drink of *salphi*, the fermented sap of the sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*), which is raised from cuttings in large numbers all over the Hill Maria country. The threshed grain is winnowed by men only, winnowing being as taboo to women as sleeping in the fields or threshing. One man stands on a rough wooden platform and pours the grain from a basket held above his head, while another, if there is not wind enough, winnows the falling grain with a basketry winnowing fan of the usual Indian type (*het* in Maria). All the men and women of the village combine to carry the threshed and winnowed grain of each cultivator to his compartment in the long granary. They never measure their produce, but there is no taboo on this account; it simply is that they grow crops for their own sustenance, and not for sale, and it is easy to see whether the grain garnered is adequate for the coming year or not. They do indeed understand something of bazaar measures, for some of their pulses and oil seeds are sold annually to raise the money needed to pay their poll-tax; they make their own measures of basketry, with different traditional shapes for each kind of produce that they sell; and at the bazaar you may see them measuring out their produce in these in front of the Hindu tradesmen to whom they are selling it. Their measures are very accurate, and need never be challenged. If they make them a little too large, they plaster a little mud over the bottom to reduce the capacity.

[1] I have since seen *kodon* and *kutki* threshed in the same way by Korkus on the Betul border of Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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796 one visits the celebrations of other clans. The first new-eating is preceded by about four days by the *pira-mansha* or disease-riddance ceremony. Before holding this, the *kasyeq-gaita* obtains the permission of the clan-god. In the early morning every woman sweeps out her house, and the *kasyeq-gaita* goes to each house and collects a little of the sweepings in a winnowing-fan. Before noon all the males of the village go out to the western boundary, and there the collected sweepings are cast aside, either in the winnowing-fan, or else wrapped in rags and tied round a bamboo stick. They hang up on the boundary on cords between trees all their old winnowing-fans and broken baskets. Unmarried boys hang up [481] on a wooden frame at the boundary all their stilts; they make these at the beginning of the rains, and use them from then till this ceremony, their use being taboo at all other seasons: for some ● [184] reason not divulged, the manufacture and use of stilts is taboo throughout every fourth year. Eggs are offered near the old winnowing-fans and stilts.

The final new-eating, *Pupal Korta Tindana*, is the important occasion of the year. The greatest celebration of this seems to be that of the Usendi clan at Orcha, where their clan-god is brought from Japgunda. From miles around other clans send their youths to dance at the Orcha *Koqsar*; the girls come to carry their food for them, and, though excluded as a matter of course from the ceremonies, join in the dancing that follows *Koqsar*. At the clan new-eating gathering the village delegations assemble in the usual way with new pulses and grain, and the clan-priest sacrifices the cocks and pigs which they bring and sprinkles their blood on the clan-god. Then, however, the flesh of the victims is not divided up and carried off to be eaten in the houses, but boiled with the grain, etc., brought by the villages, in the clan-god's cooking pots kept at his *pen-rawar* in a special shed. When cooked, the stew is spread on a great dish of *siari* leaves stitched with thorns or bamboo splinters, and all the men sit round it on stones in a great circle, while the clan-priest goes round and, with his hands, serves a helping from the communal dish in each man's leaf-plate. The [535 *Koqsar* portion of the festival seems to be the orgy of dancing that 834] follows; for it should be remembered that in most of the Abujhmar country this festival signifies the end of the long period during which it is taboo for the men to sleep in their houses and to have sexual [533] intercourse. It is not a coincidence that the drums are beaten with the same rhythm at *Koqsar* and at weddings.

796 Small villages often do not have a separate *Pupal Korta Tindana* 622 before the Village Mother. But in the larger villages, especially where the *udam-garya* custom prevails, the village celebration is

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534 attached by criss-cross thongs of the same material to rings of the same material tied round the outside of the bowl in its centre and just above its base. The thongs are passed through holes pierced in the overlap of the membrane with the point of the knife or of an arrow, and pulled taut without anything being done to guard the edge of the membrane from tearing. Occasionally pottery bowls [177] are used instead of *salphi* or *bija* wood, a practice learnt both from the Teluguized Gonds of the south and the northernmost Murias of Antagarh tahsil.

533 The *turam* drum is placed on the ground between the outspread legs of the player, who sits on his buttocks with legs bent at the knee. The drum-sticks are held lightly between the index and middle fingers, the right stick being somewhat larger than the left. [784] It is taboo to beat a *turam* except at Koqsar and weddings, though nowadays most of them regard the taboo as lifted for a dance at a high official's camp. The ordinary rhythm at Koqsar and weddings is :— .

The rhythm thus begins and ends on a long beat with the right hand, with six short left hand and five short right hand beats alternately in between.

534 I saw once at Nugur a small drum of the *turam* shape made with a hollow gourd bowl.

When it is taboo to use the *turam* drums, boys use what are called by them *pak-dol* or *veddur-dol*, literally 'bamboo-drums', which are really split-stringed instruments. They are made of two-foot lengths of the thick bamboo called *noli-veddur* by the Marias, or *bendri-bans* in Halbi. The outer rind of the bamboo is prised apart from the rest of the bamboo for a length of about eighteen inches, three inches being left joined at each end. The prised rind is about one-eighth of an inch thick and an inch and a half wide. It is raised from the body of the bamboo by two small bridges (*barga*) of bamboo inserted at each end as near its junctions with the body of the bamboo as possible, and is made into three 'strings' by two longitudinal cuts. The drum is laid on the ground and rubbed firmly into position in the dust, and dust is poured along its sides; the 'strings' are then struck with light drum-sticks in the same way as the *turam*. The Bison-horn Marias do not make this.

Brass dish-shaped gongs (*gatta*) struck with sticks used, till a few years ago, to be an indispensable part of the bride-price or

[See cat. 116, pp. 421-422, - Anal-ysi]

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other villages. Though this is called the 'remains-eating' feast, yet actually fresh meat is killed and cooked, because women and girls, who are not allowed to attend the sacrifices, are equally debarred from eating any part of the sacrificial victims. The day ends in *landa* drinking and dancing. In these first-fruits *pandum* dances the bison-horn head-dresses used not to be worn, and in the dance following the *pandum* for new *mahua* and new mangoes men and women dancers dance together, and not separately as in all other Bison-horn Maria dances.

We come now to the great vernal sowing festival with its attendant dancing and hunting that takes place on or near the full moon day of Chait (March-April), and corresponds to the Chait-rai festival of the Bhattras, Parjas and Murias. It starts on a Sunday, five or six days after the *Marka Pandum*. *Landa* is brewed in profusion in every house for days in advance, and as much *mahua* liquor procured from the excise shops as household funds and the excise rules permit. Sexual continence is, as in all these ceremonies, the rule for the night before the festival begins, and in some villages is ensured by all the men sleeping together that night and until the last ceremony is over, generally in the *kadri-bera* field or at the place from which the ritual *weta* hunt sets off.

The Wijja Pandum, Wijja Weta and Jur Weta

The *perma* fasts next morning, and after the men of the village have had their morning meal goes at about noon to the *mahua* tree in the *kadri-bera* or *wijj-erhu* (see pp. 205-6) field, with a supply of rice and an egg, and the men accompany him. He cuts a small bough off the tree, to which in some villages he first sacrifices a black cock. He clears and plasters with cow-dung and water the usual small rectangle of ground, and in the centre makes a hole in which he plants the *mahua* bough and a plant of *dab* (*Pollinia argentea*) grass. In front of this he sprinkles rice and egg-shells, in which he sets an egg upright on its end in the name of the Village Mother, or of Bhu-deo and Bhu-devi. He then takes up a *datun* or tooth-cleaning twig of *mahua*, splits it longitudinally in his teeth, and throws the split pieces three times on the ground. For the pieces to fall one on the other like a saltire each time is the best of omens for the coming hunt and the ensuing harvest; for them to fall apart is a bad omen. Sometimes this consultation of the omens does not take place in the *kadri-bera* field, but in the forest at the place from which the ritual hunt is to start; there sometimes a rough altar of bows and arrows, as in the illustration opposite, is made, and the *perma*, facing the east, places on the ground before the altar three heaps of mixed bran and egg-shells in the name of each of the three Ban Kunwarin or Forest-maidens, and on each

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pig, sprinkles their blood over the goddess and over each of the *saja* leaves, and breaks the top of each of the eggs with his knife. Then he offers the goddess ears of *chikma*, other early millets, and mountain rice; if the latter is not yet in ear, he offers a flowering rice stalk. He then prostrates himself with the palms of his hands flat on the ground, belches, and prays the goddess as their mother to accept these first-fruits, to grant them grace to have their new-eating feast, and to save her witless children from all troubles and adversity. He then hands each man one of the bloodstained *saja* leaves, and, leaving someone to watch over the slain victims, all go and bury the leaves in their fields. Each man then brings a handful of old rice from his house to the *kadri-bera* field, and hands it over to the *perma*, who cooks the bodies of the victims and the rice separately, and distributes them to the men, who eat their share there.

Meanwhile the women, for whom it has been taboo to attend the ceremony in the *kadri-bera* field and the burial of the leaves, will have prepared meal from the new millets and mountain rice; the grains are still rather green, and are roughly threshed, parched in a broken earthen crock held over the fire, pounded with the *uspal* husker, winnowed free of husks, and ground between two hand mill-stones with a quantity of salt; some mix in a little *gur* sugar. The wife of each head of a family cooks the new flour in a Hanal Kunda or Pot of the Departed (not, of course, that in which oil, etc., is placed in the name of the newly dead), along with new vegetables from the *bari*, other than gourds, beans and cucumbers. When the head of the family returns from the sacrificial meal already described, he brings with him the junior members of his family, but *not* his wife-clan relatives, and some of them bring small chickens. He sacrifices these to the Departed, offers them some of the new flour and vegetables, and pours a libation of *mahua* spirit and *landa* on the floor of the corner of the *wijja-lon* room that is dedicated to the cult of the Departed. The new flour and vegetables are then eaten in his house by them, their wives and their unmarried children; but no one of any other clan may participate, and on that day no one must give anything out of his house, not even fire from his hearth, to anyone of another clan.

On the next day, however, there is the usual remains-eating feast (*Hara Tindana*) in their houses, to which they are free to invite friends, brother-clan and wife-clan relatives, whom they regale on *mahua* spirit and on *landa*. In the evening they dance the *korlam* dance without their bison-horn head-dresses, but with men and women dancing separately in their usual way.

In villages where there is a log-god and a *Mataguri* or hut-shrine of Mata, the sacrifices on the first day are made before each, the

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a table-stone with a white pebble on it may be erected in the name of the clan-god under a *saja* tree. The *pərma* sacrifices cocks and a pig or goat on behalf of the village in the usual way, and washes some new husked rice and *kuthi* and offers it to the god. The men cook and eat the sacrificial meat then and there. The wife-clan relatives may be present, but in most villages are not allowed to participate in the sacrificial rice and meat and are supplied with other rice and meat which they cook separately. The usual remains-eating feast takes place in the houses next day.

The Jata Pandum

At the Jata Pandum, held somewhere near the full moon of Pus (December-January), they celebrate the eating of the first new beans, pulses, and the latest ripening grains. There is the usual public sacrifice for the men before the log-god or the Village Mother. In the south, towards the Dorla border, the festival is known as Chikur Pandum, and the sacrifices are always to a table-stone beneath a *saja* tree known as Dhania Deo, which, like the Bhattra Dhani, appears to be only another form of the earth-god. The only special feature of this *pandum* is that the domestic sacrifice and libations to the Departed in the house are often followed by a ceremony for weaning suckling children, the first food given being some of the rice and sacrificial meat cooked in the Pot of the Departed.

This takes place in Magh (January-February), soon after the Jata Pandum, and, as already observed, is preceded by the *Kare Weta* in which fields and open spaces are beaten for small game. I was unable to ascertain what other special features, if any, the festival has, or whether new grass and new bamboo are offered to the gods. Until the festival has been held it is *malo* or taboo to cut grass or bamboos or to start felling timber for *erka*, *parka* and *penda* cultivation.

The Kare Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum comes very soon after the Kare Pandum. I have no detailed information. But it is a ceremony for ensuring a good rainfall in the coming monsoon. It takes place by the Bhimul post in the *kadri-bera*, over which a booth of boughs is erected. Men and women attend. The booth is decorated with strings of mango leaves. The *pərma* sacrifices a white cock and an egg, and pours *landa* over the Bhimul post; and men and women then empty over the post baskets containing a little of every kind of field produce. Men and women then sit in the open, and consume *landa*. All night the village women dance, led by the *pərma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head or in her arms.

The Bhimul Pandum

The Bhimul Pandum is really the last of the *pandum* held in all villages. It only remains to mention the Mandai or Deoguri

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769 Marias are under the protection of the Departed. The old prejudice against sexual intercourse in the house, still alive in the remotest [834] Abujhmar villages, was due to a belief that it was disrespectful to the *hanal*; it survives everywhere, therefore, to discourage strangers from adultery with the wife in the husband's absence, and it is believed that such adultery entails the immediate wrath of the *hanal*. The *hanal* are the guardians of the rules of taboo, 769 of which those forbidding individuals to start agricultural operations 784 until the appropriate ceremony has been held and all the village is able to get to work together serve to strengthen and maintain the traditions of village co-operation. Women are the soil in which is sown the seed of the race, and the *hanal* naturally, therefore, punish infringement of the taboos which safeguard them, such as the menstruation taboos, the taboo against sexual intercourse during pregnancy, and those requiring the wife to remain secluded for a month after delivery. The vague association of the Departed 769 and the clan-god in the Maria mind that is evidenced by the common 776 use of the expression *pen-hanal* has already been mentioned. As 614 the clan-god is looked upon as the first ancestor of the clan, this association is not unnatural, and so the clan-god will help the Departed to protect the household and to punish breaches of the taboos, and, above all, of the laws of exogamy.

769 Even though the final offering of a menhir at the *kotokal* or *wrakal* be the last thing that an individual *hanal* can demand in his name or be aggrieved at not receiving, yet even then he is absorbed into the general body of the Departed, who must still be propitiated by the various domestic observances in the *lonu* and the *wijja-lon* rooms.

The future life

775 What is the extent to which it is believed that the dead have future life? Russell and Hiralal have again (III, p. 96) to be criticized for the generalization that the Bastar Gonds have 'a conception of retribution after death for the souls of evil-doers', for which the sole foundation seems to be one of their usual picturesque but unsound statements, that the souls adjudged sinful after death are 'hurled down into a dense forest without any *salphi* trees', so that the Bastar Gond 'idea of a place of punishment for departed sinners is, therefore, one in which no alcoholic liquor is to be had'. This could refer only to Hill or Bison-horn Marias, who almost alone in Bastar use *salphi* liquor. The source of the information is not stated; but much, I think, emanated from a few Jagdalpur Methodist converts. Nowhere in Bastar is there, so far as I could ascertain, any such idea of so tangible a hell. Only 775 around Orchha and a few neighbouring Chhota Dongar *pargana* Hill 776 Maria villages did I find any idea of a vague Supreme Being, Ispural.

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615 618 Poriami clan of the Kuhrami or Cuckoo phratry has the buffalo, which has supplanted the tiger as the totem of the Sodi or Tiger phratry, since tigers so far forgot themselves as to kill and eat some men of the phratry. In the Cuckoo phratry two clans, the Kartami and the Kuhrami (which gives its name to the phratry), have the *karot* or hornbill as totem, while the Kunjami clan has the *kunje* or screech-owl. In all these cases it is the clan totem that matters, not the phratry totem; the Hemla clan will kill goat or cobra, the Kartami and Kuhrami the cuckoo, and the Kalmu the goat. Some clans have no totem of their own, but have no scruples about touching, killing or eating the totem of their phratry; examples are the Tamo clan in the Goat phratry, the Oika clan in the Tiger or Buffalo phratry, and the Birya or Big Markami, the Gonche, the Miriyami, the Nupo and the Tati clans in the Markami Tortoise race. Two conclusions follow. The first is that certain clans in the phratry, those with different totems, probably did not split off from the parent clan of the phratry, but were independent clans grouped into the phratry at a later stage, probably owing to contiguity. The second thing is that the association of the totemic animal or plant with phratries and clans is so far from universal and plays so small a part in the life of the whole tribe that it is either something new, borrowed from another culture, but not really assimilated, or else a relic of something that has decayed with antiquity. It is remarkable that the Birya or Big Markami clan should not have any scruples about the tortoise, the totem of the Markami or Tortoise phratry, while the Chudala or Small Markami clan is very particular about it. Yet it is only of the tortoise totem that there is any [773] legend; there is said long ago to have been a great flood, which the brothers Markam and Kawasi were unable to cross until a tortoise came and took them on its back.[1] Some, however, do go ● [784] out of their way to avoid touching or harming their totem, particularly the Kawasi Tortoise phratry; blindness is the punishment which eating the totem is said to involve. I was told by a Kawasi

[1] This legend of the origin of the tortoise totem is one of the very few traces (the only trace that I have met) among Bastar Marias of the Ramcharsa legend of the origin of the Gonds. In the version of this given in Trench's *Gondi Grammar*, Vol. II, all the ancestors of the Gonds were stopped on their way to worship the Great God by a great flood, 'whereupon in haste they plunged into the river, and one caught hold of a Tendu log, another a Sirras, another a palm tree, another a teak tree, another an iguana, another a tiger, thus each seizing something or other, they forded the river. Having crossed the river, they assembled near a Saj tree, and ate the new rice that ripens in hollows, and drank, and asked each other, "What did you catch hold of when you crossed?" They said, "I for my part seized a palm tree and forded on it, I a teak tree, and I a tiger." Addi-rawan-pariol says, "Then your *pari* will be the Palm tree, yours the Teak, and yours the Tiger." Thus *paris* were found for all of them'

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THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*ketul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

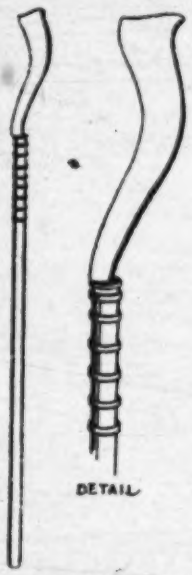

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchedar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

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241 they still make a small *parha* plot somewhere in their fields so that some of the grain will mature quickly and they will have enough to eat at home.

Their big fields are generally embanked, often irrigated with some ingenuity. They are distinguished according to the soil and location—*dhar neli* or *gabhār* is a low-lying rice-field, a *tikra* is a field on a slope, a *dobha* or *mal* is an ordinary level field—and they are often given names, the Cat-stone Field, the Field of the Frogs, the Field of the Ghost.[1]

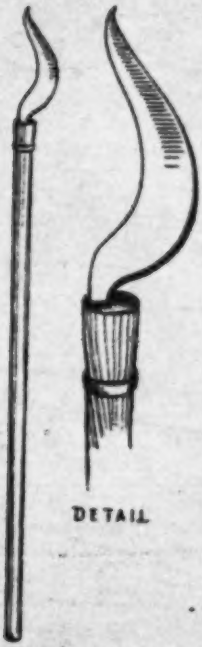

FIG. 4. Yerk used in the same way as the gagra, but of a different pattern
Length 3' 10"

Perhaps the most treasured thing, and often actually the most profitable, in a Muria's agricultural life is the *bāri* or garden enclosure near his house. This is carefully fenced with a stockade or with bamboo wattle-work, and is manured and enriched with the sweepings of the house and the droppings of the cattle throughout the year.

Here the Muria sows the profitable oil-seeds, sarson, til or arsi; here he sets beans by the fence, and a broad patch of red *jira* spinach. Often he plants some castor trees, or a sago-palm, sometimes plantain and papaya. One specially guarded patch contains his tobacco supply for the year.

Once the seed is sown, the attention of chelik and motiari is largely diverted from the ghotul to the fields. Ghotul life is almost suspended, though the smaller children go and solemnly imitate the habits of their elders. Little fires twinkle in the fields and the sweet music of the flute comes through the darkness.

When the first grain appears on the shoots, the Gaita offers an egg to Tallur Muttai to ensure its safety.

During the season, in the permanent fields there is a lot to be done. The embankments must be constantly repaired. The sprouting rice must be puddled with a board dragged by bullocks. The girls must go to weed. The boys set fish-traps where the water escapes through the embankments. It is a time of danger and taboo: an act of adultery may blight the grain, a quarrel discourage its growth.

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[184]

Everybody goes to reap the crop. They use the ordinary iron sickle. Before thrashing, the bundles are piled up on wooden platforms, heaped into rough bins, sometimes just stacked in neat circles on the ground.

The first sheaf cut is tied to a tree overlooking the field or clearing.

252 The *hara* thrashing-floor is prepared by men, for in many villages it is taboo for women to do this, and so the men clear the ground in or near the field, plaster and cow-dung it. In the middle they place a pole (*mer-gutta*) to the top of which they often tie a sheaf (Plate X). If they are going to use oxen, they attach a pole to the *mer-gutta* and drive the animals round in the usual way. Often, however, the Muria thrash with their feet (Plate X). If there

[1] For an account of names of fields in India, see *North Indian Notes and Queries*, Vol. I (1892), pp. 115 and 141.

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883 462 the embankment of a field, both can join in spreading brushwood over a clearing.

883 462 A motiari can put her hand to a plough and help her chelik in the long labour of the furrow. She can go with her chelik to the forest for wood and she can help him carry it, but she must not use an axe, though she may break bits of wood with her hands or feet. She may not kill anything, yet she can join the beat for small game and she may fix a trap in the river and bale water out so that the boys can catch the fish. But she must not use a bow and arrow, or a knife, or thrust the plunge-traps into the water.

● 784 [412]

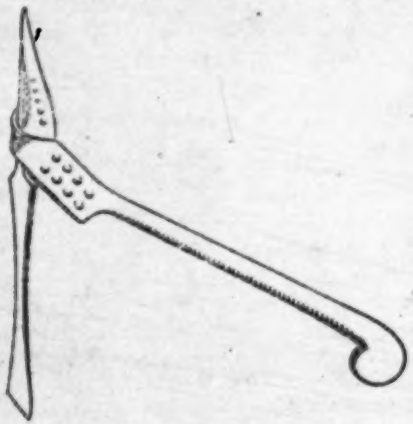

FIG. 14. *Baras* or *tatli* used for cutting up meat and planing wood
Length of upright 9"

A motiari, once she is mature, must not sleep on a machan to watch the fields. She must never go with a boy to sleep there—if she does a tiger will shake it and perhaps kill them both. In some villages, she may cow-dung the thrashing-floor, provided it is of her own clan, but she cannot thrash with her feet, or winnow the grain from a fan though she may do it with her hands. She must not sow seeds of rice or millet, though she does sometimes sow beans and vegetables.

883 462 The motiari gather mahua flowers with the boys; they collect myrabolams, and extract oil. Very important, they take food to the boys while they are working in the fields. This is a constant motive of romance in folk-tales.

883 [791] The motiari may attend a funeral and most of the festivals. At the New Eating ceremonies they prepare the plates and cups for the feast, and are eager spectators of the ceremonies. They dance at most festivals with the boys. But I know of no Muria women Siraha-mediums or Gunia-diviners, though these are not unknown in Chhattisgarh. I am told, however, that there is a female Siraha of Pendrawandin in Gudabera, and there is a tradition that in former times it was the women who sacrificed to the gods. 'In those days, they used to cut the tail instead of the head and the bird or animal instead of dying would escape. Men soon got annoyed at this and said, " You women do not know how to do it; from now we will sacrifice ". Men then began to cut off the heads of the birds and animals and the sacrifices were complete. This is why women do not eat the head of any bird or animal offered to the gods. They said to their husbands, " Now the head is yours, ours is the tail ".'

[784]

462 784 There are not many absolute taboos. A man must not husk grain or grind it. He must not wash women's clothes or wear them—except at night. Girls must not wear boys' turbans and clothes except on ceremonial occasions.

883 On the whole, Muria economy provides many opportunities for boys and girls to work together in the open air. This is one reason why their relations remain so fresh and healthy.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

I. Dress and Fashions

THE chelik and motiari, as we have seen, pay a lot of attention to their charming persons, so much attention indeed and of such a varied nature that it is not easy to describe their fashions in a single chapter. But the task is made somewhat easier by the tradition of ghotul solidarity. To be in the fashion, according to Muria ideas, it is essential that all the girls of any one village should look exactly alike. They must have the same coloured cloth round their loins, the same ornaments in their ears, the same bangles on their wrists, the same kind of beads about their necks. The Belosa sets the fashion and all her subjects follow it. There is a little more latitude allowed to boys, especially to the leaders. The Malik of Jungani can wear a wonderful comb fashioned with a chelik and motiari on horseback; the Kotwar of Chandabera can have a tobacco-pouch shaped like a fish in his turban; the Manjhi of Kabonga can go about with a beautifully-carved wooden bird perched on the comb in his hair. But girls cannot do that sort of thing; for them originality is bad taste.

There are five main fashion areas—the villages along the northern border, the Jhoria of the south and centre, the Muria of the north-west near the Abujhmar, the villages round Kondagaon and along the main road and the eastern forest approaching the Jeypore boundary. Each of these areas has its own special style.

There are, however, certain general observations that may be made of Muria everywhere. All Muria wear the same kind of cloth. It is taboo for a Muria to weave, and most of their cloth comes from the local Ganda and Mahara weavers. The cloth is good, but unenterprising, generally plain white with a red stripe or band. The chelik rarely wear a dhoti; all they can usually afford is a loin-cloth tied round the waist, passed between the legs and allowed to hang down in front. Well-to-do boys use a broader cloth that covers the buttocks, but most leave them bare and only conceal the private parts with a narrow strip that forms a sort of bag.

Girls wear a small cloth, supported back and front by their waist-string, to cover the private parts. Over it they wind round the loins a small strip of cloth like a very short skirt, carrying the end up and over one shoulder so as somewhat to conceal the breasts, and tucking it in again behind. In the Jhoria and north-western parganas, both breasts are often left exposed when no stranger is near, and nearly always one breast is visible—a fact that gives point to the riddle: 'The cow-shed is twelve cubits long, yet the two cows can't get inside.'

Muria boys and men usually wear a turban, and this varies not so much from a desire to be in the fashion but according to what one can afford. The classical Muria turban is tied round and round to form a sort of box on the head; in eastern Kondagaon the overhanging flaps are carefully decorated with coloured fringes. This box is rightly so named, for it not only covers the head, but serves as a receptacle for combs, mirrors, leaf-pipes and anything else that a boy may wish to take about.

Neither motiari nor married women cover their heads in conventional village fashion. It is a mark of a Muria girl that her head should be proudly free.

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PERSONAL ADORNMENT AND POSSESSIONS

In some villages of the Bomra Pargana, if a comb falls down, it must be left where it is for a whole day. No one else may pick it up, and the owner should say nothing to anybody.

FIG. 90. Wooden hair-pins from the Jhoria area
Longest pin 4¼″
(*See p. 386*)

In most places, there is a rule that when a motiari marries she should remove her combs within a certain time. Naturally if she has a dozen or more in her hair, the presents of a ghotul lover, it is only proper for her to return them to him when she marries someone else. But suppose it was her own husband who gave them to her, or another girl? Then she continues to wear them. It is not safe to say that a girl with combs is a motiari, one without combs a wife. I have seen women with three children wearing them. But usually the smart silvered ones are removed within a year of marriage.[1]

IV. CLEANLINESS

The Muria are, on the whole, a clean and tidy people. The chelik and motiari especially are devoted to their toilet, wash their clothes frequently,

[1] The Lakher and Lushai share the Muria objection to other people using their combs. 'They fear that if a man who is subject to headaches or who has a vampire soul uses another's comb', the owner may suffer in the same way.—Parry, op. cit., p. 34.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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words. From this shrine he took a bunch of peacock's feathers which he handed to the Gain—the leader of the singers.

The chelik now assemble outside the Gaita's house and the Gain takes the spear in his hand and they dance the stick-dance for the first time. After that they dance before the ghotul. Then they go with the Gaita and a Siraha along the road to their first point of call. When they reach the village boundary, the Gaita draws a line across the path and places on it seven rings of aonra leaf, seven bits of iron slag and makes seven little piles of rice. The Gaita and Siraha squat down by the side of the path, and the boys step across the line one by one, exclaiming 'Let us return safely'. Should any magical or supernatural danger be threatening one of the boys, the Siraha will immediately react by falling into a trance or jerks, and the expedition will be halted until the danger is discovered and removed.

Once the boys have crossed the line, they have definitely passed out of the ordinary world. They are dedicated to Lingo Pen and must be about his business. They are charged with spiritual power and open to spiritual attack. The rules and taboos of the expedition must be rigorously observed. Some of these rules seem to be intended to segregate the boys from all the associations of sex; others to protect them from catching the spiritual infection of strange villages.

I have already noticed the rule of chastity. Reinforcing this are rules forbidding the chelik to enter the compound of any ghotul or even to touch its fence. Except for the six leaders, the other boys may dance with the motiari, but they must not touch them. They dance in separate rows. They must not pass under the Diwali decorations in any house—for to these boys Diwali has no associations with the Feast of Lights, but is rich with memories of erotic adventure with the girls who have visited their villages for the Diwali dance. Nor may the boys enter any door or touch the thatch of any roof; they must not eat from the hands of a married woman; they must be careful that not even the shadow of a woman in her menses falls upon them. Such regulations remind the boys of their separation for the time being from all domestic ties.

Should a boy's ghotul-wife begin her period while he is on the expedition, the fact is shown him in a dream, and he must make or promise an offering to Lingo. The boys are generally warned of danger by dreaming about tigers.

In order to protect the chelik from the infection of a strange village, there is a rule that the fire with which they cook their food must always be lighted from the need-fire smouldering on the point of the sacred spear. On the other hand they are allowed to eat from the motiari of the village they visit—but their own boys must serve the food. Two boys are appointed cooks, one to see to rice, one to the pulse and salt. The chelik and motiari of the village visited may bring food, even cooked food, but they should not talk much and must soon go away. When they lie down to sleep round the fire in their little camps under trees near the ghotul, the boys must light this fire also with the need-fire.

They are not allowed to cross over a fallen tree. They must keep to the same order and pairs with which they started. At the first dance of all, the Gaita cries 'Make up your pairs' and henceforth they must never change partners. They must always dance in the same order. A boy must always sleep with his partner, and with no other. If they break this rule they will die, and it is said that in Talabera this did actually happen. If one member of a pair dies, his *jori* or mate will die also. Probably a quite sensible rule to ensure the technical perfection of the dancing has been exalted into a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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taboo. It is very dangerous to make mistakes in the dancing or stick-beating, and any kind of error is heavily penalized.[1] If one of the boys makes a mistake the Gaita of the village visited removes the turban of the Gain and the boys have to pay a fine of two bottles of liquor before he will return it. Should a boy drop his stick or if his dhoti gets loose, he has to pay a similar fine. Anything dropped must be picked up with the teeth.

Special rules control the conduct of the three leading pairs, the Gain and Jokta or Roche-sela and two other couples. They must talk to no one; they must not dance with the motiari of the villages they visit; they may only sing the special Pus Kolang songs.

The dancing party from Phulpar in 1941 visited Sarandi, Kurse, Kutgaon and Tursani. When they reached Sarandi, they went straight to the Gaita's house and danced before it. As they entered the village they sang,

Re rela rela re rela rela re rela re rela.

Show us the Gaita's house, chelik.
Don't you know the Gaita's house, chelik?
Where have you come from, chelik?
We have come from the land of hills.
If we show you, what will you give us, chelik?
We will give you a cloth for your loins.
It's the house with a cart in the yard, chelik.
There is a pond for the buffaloes in front, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.
On a bamboo pole there's a monkey, chelik.
There's an elephant tied to the pillar, chelik.
There's a horse tied in the shed, chelik.
On the roof there sits a peacock, chelik.
There's a gun against the fence, chelik.
A sword against the wall, chelik.
A parrot on its perch, chelik.
A maina in a cage, chelik.
That's the Gaita's house, chelik.

The boys sing this song to a circular stick-dance rather slowly and reverently as if their words were charged with deep spiritual meaning. Then while two boys take a basket into the house to beg for rice, pulse and salt, the others begin their programme of dances.

[1] For similar beliefs in the danger of making a mistake during a ceremonial dance, see J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy* (London, 1910), Vol. III, p. 518. Compare also A. B. Ellis, *The Ewe-Speaking Peoples of the Slave Coast* (London, 1890), p. 95.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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second after a time. In 6 other cases a plural marriage was in progress, but was unhappy and disturbed by constant quarrels. 595

Polygyny is not socially disapproved—though an incidence of only 2 per cent might suggest it was. The Muria's attitude is rather that a man has undertaken more than he is likely to be able to manage, and is more to be pitied for his difficulties than to be condemned for impropriety.

For example, at Berma, a Muria said, 'Two wives are like two drums with the player in between; he beats one or he beats both according to the rhythm required. But a good drummer does his best with a single drum'. Or again at Kanhargaon they said, 'You will always hear the noise of pots clashing and breaking in a house with two wives; nothing is done properly, not even rice is cooked in time'. And the Kandki of Bunagaon said, 'I am dried up even by one wife. How could I manage another?' But elsewhere I have heard it said that a clever man can keep two wives happy 'just as two hands beat the two ends of a drum in rhythm'.

It is everywhere said that the wives quarrel, not through sexual jealousy or about prestige, but because each thinks the other shirks her due share of work. As I show later in the chapter this question of the distribution of work is very important to the Muria mind and is indeed the cause of most of the quarrels and a high percentage of the suicides in Muria society. [578 762]

For example, in the following record of a quarrel it is the dispute about work that is really important. A husband has been neglecting his senior wife. 'Is my vagina bitter and hers so sweet?' she says and then turns on the junior. 'You *bāploti*, it is I who made this man what he is today: everything in the house is mine; all you should eat is my leavings.' The younger girl replies, 'I didn't come here of my own accord: he is as much my husband as yours, for it is he who brought us both here'. Then the husband says to the elder, 'Don't be angry. I have brought this girl, not because I love her more than you, but so that she can help you in your work'. 'But that is what she never does. When I am cooking, she should fetch wood, when I am defiled, she should cook. But she refuses.' The younger wife, in some villages, has to observe various vital taboos. She cannot approach the Pot of the Departed at will. She can only go at the New Eating Festivals after an offering has been made and a feast enjoyed. Before this she should not take any grain to the place where the Pot is kept. [784] ●

In the sexual sphere it is supposed to be comparatively easy to manage two or even three wives.[1] The headman of Chandabera, a charming man with the body of an athlete, told me how he arranged that he himself and each of his two wives slept in three different places. Then he made love to one or the other according to his desire, not much caring whether the other was awake and watching or no. On this point, he said, he never had trouble. In Badgaon, a Muria said that he had to have his senior wife three times a day and the junior twice in order to stop them fighting over his body—but this was doubtless an exaggeration.

I will quote some of the remarks made by these sexual athletes during the statistical inquiry.

A Sirdar of Kejang: 'I did not care for my first wife: I married her at my parents' wish, and they were more interested in marrying a rich man's daughter

[1] In many tribes, leading 'characters' take pride in keeping a number of wives. A Maria of the Oyami clan in Kesapur had six wives; in Kerlapal another Maria had seven. I found a Juang in Keonjhar State with seven. The famous Yogi Baiga of Mandla had six, with twenty-six children. A Pardhan of Balaghat had a similar number and used to take them all, walking behind him in a file, when he went to a bazaar.